United Nations A/64/281

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 August 2009

Original: English

Sixty-fourth session
Item 28 of the provisional agenda*
University for Peace

University for Peace

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

As it approaches its thirtieth anniversary year, the University for Peace continues its extraordinary growth and development as it carries out the mandate given to it by the General Assembly in 1980. The University for Peace has enrolled a record number of master's degree students at its main campus in Costa Rica for the academic year 2009-2010. It has held graduations this year in Africa, Asia and North America, and it is showing a steady growth in earned income. It has added new master's programmes, such as its innovative and timely programme on responsible management and sustainable economic development, and is expanding its distance learning courses with the objective of offering an executive master's degree for students who cannot travel to a campus for their studies. University for Peace professors teach in many troubled regions, and University alumni are serving in key positions throughout the world, making use of what they learned to help prevent or recover from conflicts, to ensure respect for human rights and to strive for justice, good governance and sustainable and equitable development.

The present report summarizes the activities and development of the University during the past three years — its successes as well as the challenges it faces, including the continuing challenge of obtaining adequate funding and essential host country services, specifically safe and reliable road access to the campus. Despite this lack of adequate support from Member States, the University for Peace is expanding its activities around the world. The present report urges all Member States to contribute to support the University for Peace in view of the fact that students from virtually every country represented in the General Assembly have benefited from its programmes.

* A/64/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The University for Peace was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 35/55 "with a clear determination to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace and with the aim of promoting among all human beings the spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate cooperation among peoples and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress, in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations". It was invited to establish its main campus in Costa Rica, which has been its host country ever since.

2. Significant efforts have been made in the past 10 years to revitalize and extend the activities of the University. The present report, which is submitted to facilitate consideration by the General Assembly of the item entitled "University for Peace", pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/108, summarizes the progress made by the University and highlights the challenges it faces as a result of its rapid growth and lack of reliable funding.

3. The present report has five major sections: (a) University for Peace 2007-2009; (b) accreditation and external evaluation; (c) future development strategy (2009-2010); (d) practical challenges; and (e) resource base. It describes the substantial progress made towards building high-quality programmes of education and training, developing relationships with other institutions to reach as many interested students as possible, public relations efforts, and the University's determination to be self-sustaining on the basis of its earned income. It also describes the specific needs of the institution, principally the expansion and modernization of campus facilities, the regularization of the international staff under the United Nations salary and retirement system and the establishment of regular funding and an endowment to stabilize the institution.

4. The University for Peace continues its efforts to strengthen cooperation with other institutions in the United Nations system, including through specific arrangements for internships by qualified University for Peace graduates, the use of United Nations officials as lecturers, training programmes of interest to United Nations organizations and offering the University campus as a venue for United Nations events.

5. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/108, noted with appreciation the vigorous actions taken by the Secretary-General to revitalize the University for Peace. The Assembly encouraged Member States, intergovernmental bodies, non-governmental organizations and interested individuals to provide financial support to the University, invited Member States to accede to the International Agreement for the Establishment of the University for Peace, and requested the Secretary-General to consider ways to further strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the University for Peace. Such support has become even more important as the University pursues partner agreements with other institutions in carrying out its mandate. Thus, the Member States of the General Assembly are again urged to provide support to the University for Peace, especially those that have never done so.

II. University for Peace, 2007-2009

6. The University for Peace has made extraordinary progress in building exemplary programmes on critical subjects related to peace and security and in extending its course offerings to all regions of the world through partnerships with other respected institutions. The University has become a recognized leader in education, training and research on all issues related to peace and conflict. Its efforts are focused on strengthening the three main components of its activities: face-to-face teaching and research; expanding its presence and programmes in all regions of the world; and distance learning to reach students who cannot come to the University for Peace.

A. Face-to-face teaching and research

7. The University continues to offer programmes in interrelated fields of peace and conflict studies. These include master's degree programmes at its Costa Rica campus in the following areas: international peace studies; international law and human rights; international law and settlement of disputes; gender and peacebuilding; peace education; natural resources and sustainable development (offered as a dual-degree programme in partnership with American University in Washington, D.C.); environmental security and peace; and media, conflict and peace studies. A new master's programme in responsible management and sustainable economic development is being offered for the first time during the 2009-2010 academic year. Since 2002 a total of 696 students from 91 countries have graduated; out of those students, 61 per cent were women. The average age of students is 32 years. More than 200 students from 69 countries are enrolled in master's degree programmes for the academic year 2009-2010.

8. In order to ensure the intrinsically interdisciplinary nature of academic offerings, all students engage in an initial foundation course in international peace studies and choose a variety of electives. The University offers a range of such electives as part of a "University for Peace Institute" in January and June of each year, inviting professionals, practitioners, academicians and students from other institutions to participate in interactive classes and informal gatherings that bring together different viewpoints and cultures.

9. The unique, multicultural character of the University for Peace headquarters campus is useful as a laboratory for developing and perfecting the University's course offerings, which are then used not only by University for Peace students in Costa Rica but also by institutional partners around the world. University for Peace course curriculums are followed at partner institutions in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and elsewhere. By this means, thousands of individuals have taken University for Peace courses at other universities.

10. A research and publication programme has also been developed by the University, with a comprehensive research policy that provides a framework for nurturing a vibrant, dynamic and intellectually stimulating environment for the generation and dissemination of knowledge. In 2006 the University for Peace launched its online reference journal, the *Peace and Conflict Review*. A more informal review, called the *Peace and Conflict Monitor*, is also available online. In 2009 the University for Peace's Africa programme published the first edition of its

Africa Peace and Conflict Journal, which is written and edited by Africans and focuses entirely on African issues.

B. Expanding programmes around the world

11. In order to reach the maximum number of students, partnerships have been established with academic, civil society and research institutions in different regions of the world. The University for Peace now conducts activities in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East and North America. The objective is to vitalize the University's mandate "to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace". Only by making its courses available to students everywhere can the University for Peace carry out this mandate.

Africa programme

12. In 2002 the Africa programme was launched with the specific mission to build capacity in Africa for peace and conflict studies. The University for Peace began a far-reaching consultative process across the continent to identify the needs, aspirations and obstacles to developing capacity for education for peace in Africa, as well as to identify partner institutions. This process led to the establishment of a five-year programme of support to an initial set of African universities to build their capacities to teach and research the vital issues of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, environmental security, reconciliation and human rights. In 2007 the Africa programme convened a consultative meeting of partners to review the activities and define strategies for the next five years.

13. The Africa office is hosted by Addis Ababa University, from which the Director, along with an Advisory Board, guides the continuing development and direction of the programme.

14. The programme has conducted numerous activities in the region, including the development of Africa-specific teaching materials on a variety of topics, such as human rights, peace and justice, gender and peacebuilding and an introduction to peace and conflict studies; the distribution of teaching materials and resources; and capacity-building workshops and training courses for regional organizations, academia and non-governmental organization networks.

15. The programme initiated the establishment of an Institute for Peace and Security at Addis Ababa University, which awarded joint Addis Ababa University for Peace-University master's degrees to the first batch of students in July 2009.

16. It has also embarked on peace research capacity-building, with the provision of support to PhD students in the areas of peace, conflict and development who are registered with a number of African universities.

Asia and the Pacific programme

17. The main objective of the Asia and the Pacific programme has been to strengthen the capacities of national and regional institutions to undertake teaching, training and research in the critical areas related to peace and conflict. The University has mobilized a network of more than 40 academic and training institutions in eight countries in South and South-East Asia. The countries in which

partnerships are already functioning are Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Emphasis is also placed on identifying and expanding the effectiveness of alternative and non-formal channels through which education for peace may reach the general populace, especially through civil society, women's and youth groups, members of defence and police services, religious institutions and similar groups.

18. Some of the activities that are already being conducted include the teaching of a joint diploma course in Sri Lanka on skills development for conflict resolution. This course is targeted at practitioners, including civil servants, military and police personnel and non-governmental organizations. Following a subregional workshop held in India as a foundation course in peace and conflict studies, a number of institutions in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka have incorporated peace studies as part of their ongoing degree programmes in international studies. During the past two years, the University conducted workshops for the development of curriculums for module courses on peace education with Islamic perspectives; peace education for civil society; and development, peace and security. Curriculum and teaching modules have been developed that will serve as tools for the teaching of these courses by the participating institutions in the region.

19. The Asia Leaders Programme, intended to develop leaders from countries throughout the region, with funding from the Nippon Foundation, is run jointly with the Ateneo de Manila University in Manila. The first graduation was held in Manila in 2008, and graduates of the programme are currently serving in key positions with national and international organizations. The programme has become extremely popular; in the past year, 30 students were selected from 300 candidates.

20. The University for Peace has recently started two dual degree programmes with Hankuk University of Foreign Studies which is based in Seoul. The students in these programmes will receive a master's degree from each university, either in international law and human rights or media, peace and conflict studies; they take a minimum of 21 credits at the University for Peace and 24 credits at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. The first two years of the programmes have attracted 32 students from the Republic of Korea.

Central Asia programme

21. The Central Asia programme was designed to transfer and build self-sustaining capabilities for peace education and civil society training, research and dialogue to local institutions and teachers. One of the major accomplishments of the University for Peace in Central Asia was the collaborative development of a curriculum on religious identity, Islam and peacebuilding. The curriculum was taught in more than 10 universities and civil society institutions in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2007. The programme, which was supported by funding from the Government of Sweden, has been suspended, however, because of a lack of funding support.

Latin America and the Caribbean programme

22. The Latin America and the Caribbean regional programme is based at the University's headquarters campus in Costa Rica and seeks to: (a) introduce the study of realities in Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of development, peace, security and democracy into the academic programmes of the University; (b) organize academic programmes about the Latin American and Caribbean reality

for audiences throughout the region; and (c) build partnerships with other institutions in the region in order to organize higher education activities for international and regional audiences to discuss peacebuilding processes and the nature of conflicts in the region.

North American programmes

23. The University for Peace has a long-standing partnership with American University in Washington, D.C., under which the two institutions award dual master's degrees on the basis of a year of study at each university. This programme concentrates on natural resources and environmental issues and has become very popular. University for Peace graduation ceremonies are held regularly, in conjunction with American University graduations.

24. The University for Peace planned for some time to open a University for Peace Centre in Toronto, Canada, as outlined in the 2006 report of the Secretary-General; unfortunately this programme had to be postponed owing to a lack of funding.

University for Peace South Asia, Middle East and Horn of Africa programme

25. With funding provided by the Government of the Netherlands, the University for Peace has initiated an innovative programme of partnerships with universities in the three regions, under which junior fellows from the partner universities study at the University for Peace and develop curriculums inspired and informed by their education there, then return to their institutions to teach on the basis of these curriculums, assisted by University for Peace professors in "co-teaching" roles. The programme has been very successful, and the University is considering ways to expand or replicate it in other regions.

26. The University for Peace has collaborated with a number of educational institutions in Egypt and Jordan and has plans to expand its activities in the Middle East as soon as funding support can be identified.

Other centres and activities

27. The University for Peace has two offices charged especially with linking it to the various bodies of the United Nations and the community of non-governmental organizations that work with the United Nations system:

(a) The University for Peace office in Geneva, in existence since 2000, was set up to be a liaison office with the United Nations and other institutions and to foster cooperation and programme development in that location;

(b) The University for Peace office in New York opened in 2001 and has served a key liaison function with United Nations Headquarters and United Nations programmes based in New York and foundations, non-governmental organizations and other institutions in the region. The University for Peace was granted observer status in the General Assembly in 2008, and the Executive Director of the University's liaison office in New York serves as the University's Permanent Observer to the United Nations. He concurrently serves as the Director of the Asia and the Pacific programme and supports the University's fund-raising efforts through organizations like the United Nations Delegations Women's Club and its "Women for Peace" project.

28. The University for Peace also has the following affiliated centres: the World Centre for Research for Peace (Montevideo); the World Centre for Research and Training in Conflict Resolution (Bogotá); and the European Centre for Peace and Development (Belgrade).

C. The University for Peace distance learning programme

29. The University for Peace has long aimed at offering its courses through distance learning techniques. This has been accomplished until now through the development of toolkits that could be used by instructors in other parts of the world. The University has realized, however, that if it is to carry out its mandate to offer its programmes "to humanity", a much broader and more easily available programme will be required. In response, the University for Peace has embarked on a far-reaching plan to convert all its courses into online and correspondence versions, which will be available to any student who wishes to take them anywhere in the world, whether or not the student has access to a computer and the Internet.

30. These course offerings will be available to students who wish to take just one or two specific courses, to students who wish to accumulate or use University for Peace course credits for their own studies and to students who wish to pursue a University for Peace executive master's degree through distance learning. The University plans to offer such a degree in 2010.

III. Accreditation and external evaluation

31. While the University for Peace has its own international academic council which has traditionally accredited its courses, the University has decided to seek conventional accreditation through the Costa Rican national accreditation agency, SINAES. This accreditation process is ongoing and is expected to yield the first course accreditations by the beginning of 2010.

32. Since 2005 the University for Peace has implemented a systematic external evaluation of all its master's programmes. The external evaluations review and assess the academic quality and performance of each programme and provide recommendations for improvement. The evaluations are reviewed by the international academic council annually to determine the eligibility of each programme for certification.

33. In addition, a midterm evaluation was carried out by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency through an external evaluator in December 2007. The evaluation examined the activities that were carried out under the cooperation agreement signed between the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the University for Peace. The overall conclusion of the evaluator was that the University for Peace was a "hidden gem" and that it was expected that the "hidden" part would be reduced in the not so distant future. Also, it established that "the University for Peace has, overall, very strong systems in place for administrative activities. The leadership personnel have excellent professional credentials and capabilities."

IV. Future development strategy (2009-2010)

A. Long-term vision

34. The University for Peace has rapidly evolved into a vibrant international institution that has established sound administrative, financial and audit systems in line with international standards. It has developed an innovative academic programme and extended its programme activities worldwide. The vision for an even more vigorous and effective institution in the long term includes the consolidation and reinforcement of the capacities of the headquarters campus serving the entire University for Peace system, with curriculum development, face-to-face teaching and research and sustained two-way links to the considerable experience and knowledge found in institutional partners in other parts of the world. The strengthening of the influence and presence of the University in several regions, and an active programme for sharing knowledge for peace (including distance learning and the dissemination of toolkits for teaching) will also be expanded in terms of content and reach.

35. In the spirit of General Assembly resolution 61/108 (paras. 2 and 3), attempts are also being made to develop collaboration between the University for Peace and the United Nations system, particularly for support in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. For example, the University for Peace has contacted most United Nations agencies to offer its graduates as interns. Many agencies have responded favourably, providing new opportunities for University graduates to enter the kinds of activities that are of interest to them.

36. The University for Peace attaches special importance to its relationships with other United Nations education and training organizations, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations University and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. It intends to strengthen its cooperation and coordination with those organizations in the context of a more cohesive and effective United Nations university system.

B. Three-year targets

Objective 1: strengthening face-to-face teaching and research

37. Building upon the success in delivering face-to-face education over the past five years, the University for Peace will aim at achieving the following goals: (a) increase the master's degree programme offerings at the headquarters campus by adding programmes on health and peace, and on modern urban challenges; (b) increase the number of master's degree students at the headquarters campus to 300 to 400. Approximately one half of these new students will be on full or partial scholarship, or deferred payment schedules in order to ensure that students from less privileged backgrounds, in particular those from developing countries, are able to benefit from the University's offerings; (c) increase the number of research projects undertaken by faculty, with the results published in internationally recognized journals.

Objective 2: extending the University for Peace presence in the world

38. The University for Peace programmes will be consolidated and strongly anchored in various parts of the world through partnership arrangements with a number of institutions, with the following main objectives: (a) to develop partnership arrangements with universities and institutions from each continent for student and faculty exchanges and possible joint or dual master's degree programmes; (b) to conduct every year in each University for Peace location curriculum development workshops and/or train-the-trainer short courses to prepare academicians and practitioners for teaching and training in the area of peace and conflict studies; (c) to encourage University for Peace alumni to return to their home institutions or to other locations in the field, in order to establish programmes in cooperation with the University and its partners; and (d) to conduct action research case studies to address relevant peace and conflict-related issues in collaboration with regional partners.

Objective 3: distance learning programme

39. The distance learning programme is moving into a new stage by expanding the availability of University for Peace courses online and in written versions, and it will soon offer an executive master's degree, in order to reach beyond the confines of the headquarters campus and the regional programme offerings for students who cannot travel to a campus for their studies.

Objective 4: self-sustainability

40. The University for Peace aims to be self-sustaining, on the basis of earned income, by 2011. This will permit the institution to focus its fund-raising efforts on improvements in facilities and expansion of services, as well as on the creation of an endowment fund.

V. Practical challenges

41. The University for Peace faces a very serious practical problem that requires the intervention and support of the host Government. That is the risky and unreliable state of access to its campus. The University for Peace has a beautiful campus, but it is relatively isolated in the mountains west of San José. To reach it, vehicles must use a single road, that winds through sharp hills and crosses a deep river gorge over an antiquated, single-lane bridge. Two years ago, that road collapsed when a huge mudslide swept about 75 metres of roadway into a ravine. The road was impassable for one month, during which time the University had no access whatsoever to its campus. Fortunately, through an extraordinary gesture of generosity from a fellow institution, the University for Peace was able to use the classroom facilities of La Salle University in San José during this period.

42. The road was temporarily fixed by bulldozers which leveled a dirt path across the collapsed section. This is what has been used by the University for Peace (and residents of the area) ever since. It is temporary, unsafe and difficult to use. Since that time there have been numerous mudslides that have closed the road temporarily, all of them reminders that the temporary fix to the road could collapse at any moment. Since the University's school buses, containing all of its students and

faculty, must pass over this dangerous section of the road twice every day, the University considers the situation laden with unacceptable risks.

43. Numerous approaches have been made to the Government of the host country requesting that this road be fixed in a safe and permanent way, in view of the Government's undertaking in the University for Peace headquarters agreement to provide "all necessary services" for the University to carry out its work. During the rainy season every year, the University must watch carefully for the moment when it must invoke its emergency action plan and evacuate its campus. Moreover, because it normally rains heavily in the afternoons campus life has been largely reduced to mornings and early afternoons, after which the university must move students out over the road to reduce the danger. This reduces the use of the University campus to half of its normal availability.

44. The University for Peace considers that it must have a minimum of two safe and reliable access roads so that, if one of them collapses or is blocked, the University can use the alternative road. Fortunately, a second access road is now a possibility, since an existing road could easily be improved and connected to an access point on a new superhighway that passes near the campus and will open shortly. The University for Peace needs the cooperation and assistance of the host country to accomplish this work on an emergency basis, in order to be able to carry out its work. The University considers this a clear obligation of the host country under the headquarters agreement.

VI. Resource base

45. The United Nations does not provide any financial support or subvention to the University for Peace. The University has therefore relied entirely on voluntary contributions from a variety of sources, namely, Governments, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic foundations and private sources. Despite the difficult resource environment, the University for Peace has so far managed to garner resources for the revitalization and rapid development and expansion of its programmes, thanks to the support of a number of donors.

46. The University for Peace has in the past received support from the following Governments, foundations and institutions: Canada (through the Canadian International Development Agency, the International Development Research Centre and the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation), Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the Dutch National Postcode Lottery, the Hanwha Group of the Republic of Korea, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America, the United Nations Development Programme, the Nippon Foundation of Japan and the Philanthropic Collaborative. At the beginning of the revitalization process, the University received support mainly from the United Nations Foundation, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Rockefeller family. That support was instrumental in enabling the institution to build a solid foundation for its programmes. Some donor Governments have also provided financial support for specific academic and training programmes of the University, as well as for its regional programmes.

47. The University for Peace has established a scholarship fund that enables deserving individuals from developing countries to obtain a high-quality education in the field of peace and conflict studies. The fund was established in 2002-2003

through a generous multi-year grant from Professor Steven Rockefeller. Scholarships have been funded since then by Germany for the programmes in peace studies, by Canada for African students and by Finland for the gender and peacebuilding programme. Since 2008 the "Women for Peace" project of the United Nations Delegations Women's Club has also provided generous scholarship funding for female students from different regions of the world. Other organizations that are supporting the fund-raising and development efforts of the University are the United States Association for the University for Peace and the Alliance for the University for Peace foundation, which was created in the Netherlands in 2002 to support the activities of the University and to stimulate cooperation between the University for Peace and other institutions in the Netherlands.

48. It is also noteworthy that the Government of the Netherlands is currently supporting the University for Peace programme in South Asia, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa to build the capacities of 17 universities in those regions to conduct master's programmes in fields related to peace and conflict studies. Similarly, the Nippon Foundation is providing generous financial support for the University for Peace Asia Leaders Programme, which enables students from Japan and other Asian countries to pursue a post-graduate degree at the University for Peace, in collaboration with Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines.

49. Being the host country, Costa Rica provided generous support to the University for Peace for a number of years including the provision of land for the University's campus, but, owing to budgetary and other constraints, this support has ceased.

50. As progress has become evident in developing and implementing the University's academic programme and strengthening its management, the credibility of the University has been enhanced. It would therefore have been hoped that Governments would have reinforced their support to the institution by continuing to provide much-needed financial resources to sustain its programmes and scholarships, in order to meet the peace and security objectives of the United Nations, but traditional funding from Government donors has unfortunately fallen off since the previous report, submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

51. While the University is determined to be more self-sustaining through its earned income — principally student tuitions and scholarships — this solution is not ideal because the mission of the University is to offer its education "to humanity", which clearly means that tuition cannot be priced at such a high level that it becomes impossible for students without means to attend. The University is also making efforts to diversify its donor base to include more Member States, foundations and individuals. The support of past and existing donors will be absolutely essential in order to sustain the momentum developed since the implementation of the revitalization process.

52. The University budget grew from $750,000 in 1999 to about $7 million in 2005-2006 but has been cut back since then, as a result of strenuous cost-cutting and the postponement of capital expenditures. This cannot continue, however, because of the urgent need to expand and modernize campus facilities to accommodate the dramatically increasing enrolment. If the institution is to function at its full potential and fulfil the mandate given to it by the General Assembly, it will need a much

stronger resource base through the support of donor Governments, as well as a substantial endowment to stabilize its situation.

VII. Conclusions

53. The University for Peace actively supports the central peace and security objectives of the United Nations, strengthening the foundations of peace by promoting tolerance and international understanding and helping to prevent conflict through education, training and research on peace and security-related areas. It has made substantial progress towards the two main objectives of its mandate from the General Assembly: (a) to build a high-quality academic programme of education, training and research on critical issues of peace and security; and (b) to extend the programme into different regions of the world from its headquarters in Costa Rica. The University has contributed richly to strengthening the human resource capabilities needed to promote peace and non-violence within those countries that pay a high human and material price for conflict, as is evident from the ever-increasing number of students in its academic and training programmes from all over the world. A very effective alumni network is being built up of active men and women working for peace in different parts of the world.

54. Nevertheless, the continued success of the University for Peace is dependent on the political and financial support of the Member States of the General Assembly. It is essential that Member States reinforce their commitment to the success of the institution by providing and increasing their financial contributions so that the University can establish a strong financial base and exploit its full potential to contribute to the aims and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to reducing the causes of violence and conflict throughout the world. For this purpose, sustained support is essential from all Member States, including the host country, which has provided very generous support in the past.